

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing amendments and reconsideration of the above-identified application are respectfully requested in view of the remarks that follow.

Claims 1, 3-8, 10-14 and 19-27 were pending prior to this submission. By this response, claims 1, 6-8, 13, 14, 21, 25 and 26 have been amended; and claims 3, 10 and 22 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been introduced.

The Abstract of the Disclosure has been amended, as set forth above, solely to conform to the amendments of the claims. No new matter has been introduced.

I. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §101:

Claim 8 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as not falling within one of the four statutory categories of invention due to stated reasons. (See, Office Action, page 2, item 2).

In response, Applicants have amended the subject claim accordingly herein. As amended, claim 8 now recites the method steps as being tied to a particular apparatus (e.g., image verification apparatus) that accomplishes the method steps. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended claim 8 qualifies under at least one statutory category of invention (e.g., a process).

Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §101 is respectfully requested.

II. Double Patenting Rejection:

Claims 1, 3-14 and 19-27 have been rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over claims 1-12 of U.S. Patent No. 7,298,932 (hereafter "Patent '932").

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-12 of Patent '932 do not disclose the specific features of "a control unit which (a) controls the image verification apparatus to display additional information of the digital image on a display unit, if the verification unit verifies that the digital image has not been altered, and (b) controls the image verification apparatus not to display the additional information except a thumbnail image of the digital image on the display

unit and to display both the thumbnail image of the digital image and information indicating that the digital image has been altered on the display unit, if the verification unit verifies that the digital image has been altered,” as recited in amended claim 1. Thus, Applicants believe that the double patenting rejection against claims 1, 4-7 and 19 have now been overcome.

Similar arguments are applicable to claims 8, 11-14, 20, 21 and 23-27 because independent claims 8 and 21, respectively, include features substantially similar to those recited in amended claim 1. In addition, as noted above, claims 3, 10 and 22 have been cancelled. Thus, the double patenting rejection of claims 3, 10 and 22 over claims 1-12 of Patent ‘932 is now moot.

Withdrawal of the grounds for double patenting rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103:

Claims 1, 3-8, 10-14 and 19-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,499,294 to Friedman (hereafter “Friedman”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,330,051 to Takanashi Teruo (hereafter “Takanashi”).

In response, Applicants have amended the pending claims as set forth above. Applicants, however, are not conceding that the subject matter encompassed by the cancelled and/or amended claims prior to this amendment are not patentable over the cited reference(s). Rather, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 8 and 21 solely to facilitate expeditious prosecution, by reciting the claimed subject matter in a more specific and clear manner. To that end, amended claim 1 now recites, *inter alia*, “a control unit which (a) controls the image verification apparatus to display additional information of the digital image on a display unit, if the verification unit verifies that the digital image has not been altered, and (b) controls the image verification apparatus not to display the additional information except a thumbnail image of the digital image on the display unit and to display both the thumbnail image of the digital image and information indicating that the digital image has been altered on the display unit, if the verification unit verifies that the digital image has been altered.” Claims 8 and 21 have been amended in a similar manner.

Support for the amendments to independent claims 1, 8 and 21 can be found, for example, in the paragraphs on page 19—line 11 through page 27—line 9 of the specification, and in the figures described therein. The amendments to the dependent claims are non-substantive. Thus, no new matter has been added.

The teachings of the cited references (i.e., Friedman and Takanashi) have been already addressed by applicants. See, for example, remarks on pages 10 through 13 of Applicants submission dated November 14, 2008. Applicants incorporate herein by reference those remarks, and continue to maintain that Friedman and Takanashi—alone or combined—do not render Applicants' claims obvious.

Specifically, Applicants submit that none of cited references—alone or in combination—discloses or suggests that “a control unit which (a) controls the image verification apparatus to display additional information of the digital image on a display unit, if the verification unit verifies that the digital image has not been altered, and (b) controls the image verification apparatus not to display the additional information except a thumbnail image of the digital image on the display unit and to display both the thumbnail image of the digital image and information indicating that the digital image has been altered on the display unit, if the verification unit verifies that the digital image has been altered” as recited in amended claim 1.

Therefore, Applicants believe that claim 1 is patentable over the references. Claims 8 and 21 are a method claim and a computer-readable medium claim respectively corresponding to claim 1 and thus are also patentable. Claims 4-7, 11-14, 19, 20 and 23-27 are also patentable because these claims depend directly or indirectly from one of claims 1, 8 and 21.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims and allowance of this application.

AUTHORIZATION

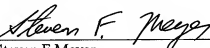
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Document to Deposit Account No. **504827**, Order No. 1232-5362.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. **504827**, Order No. 1232-5362.

Respectfully submitted,
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